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density, though as high as 220 to the square mile, cannot be an over-estimate; it is below the average of the sample areas and much below the 450 found in one of them, which is by no means the densest in the reserve.

The geographical features vary from mountains to flat country. The rainfall, which coincides with the hot months, October to March, is very good on the hills. In the flat country to the north it is rather uncertain. The mountains have many springs, but neither of the two main rivers is navigable and there is little life in them. The people do not eat fish and have no river craft, though they speak of a bark canoe (*legugwa*) used in the old days. On the slopes of the hills there are forests and one is of magnificent cycads (Mujaji palms). The people have an intimate knowledge of the names, the qualities, and the uses of the flora. Their dependence upon trees, shrubs, and grasses for food, economic purposes, and medicine is one of the most impressive aspects of their culture. The soil is a reddish, fairly fertile loam. At present there is hardly any game; but in any case the Lovedu were never great hunters, and knowledge of the fauna is now of small use. The temperature is never excessive; the summer rains cool the hot air and the cold winds are easily subdued by bright sunshine. Summer merges into winter and winter overlaps summer; there is no well-marked spring or autumn. The people are agriculturists rather than pastoralists; the few cattle they have and the more numerous goats are not considered so much as food but rather as pivots of social relationship.

The people of the royal group, the nucleus of the tribe, live mostly on the mountains; the valleys and flats are occupied by Shangana-Tonga, recent-comers who are despised by the Sotho, and by the Roka, residents of the flats, looked upon as somewhat inferior though of diverse Sotho ancestry. The nuclear group or Lovedu proper are not numerous. Their group name, *kwevo*, is what we may call the surname of one in every ten people in the reserve. Other *kwevo*, 'brothers' of the Lovedu, rule such tribes as those of Sekhɔpɔ, Mamaila and Rakwadu, but many are scattered among dozens of alien tribes. In the whole Lovedu lowveld the *kwevo* are much less than 10 per cent. of the population.

The non-nuclear groups in the reserve are accretions from outside (if we except the Khigɔa, the Dgɔna and some Lions and Elephants who either were in the country or came with the Lovedu). They have been

and the country mountainous, stationed themselves in a body at a single spot in the valley to which the people were then called. The new arrangements caused confusion and many of those who had collected in their districts dispersed to their homes and never presented themselves for enumeration. In addition, large numbers, as is their habit in the face of European intervention, secreted themselves in the bush. European eye-witnesses estimate that only 33 to 40 per cent, say 36·5 per cent, were actually enumerated, but Natives place the figure as high as 50 per cent. Taking the average of 43·25 per cent, we arrive at a total population for the reserve of 15,238 × 100 ÷ 43·25, or 35,232. (3) The number of taxpayers in the Lovedu location, which is about 4,000. On the accepted basis of calculation, the location population would be 4,000 × 5, or 20,000—that is 1·72 times that of the census figure of 11,636, and the total for the reserve may be calculated as 15,238 × 1·72 or 26,209. Finally, averaging the three figures, 36,207, 35,232 and 26,209, we get 32,549 or, to the nearest thousand, 33,000, which is the figure we adopt.

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513 By eight o'clock most of the people have already retired. The bigger
[883] boys, now lustily singing a song, stay up latest; but soon all is quiet. On moonlight nights, however, the boys and girls dance and play in the *khoro* or outside the village until a late hour. Similarly, if there is beer in the village, there will be noise well into the night and very often quarrels
[786] and fights as well. When the spirit of a possessed woman comes upon her, there may be drumming and singing for her to dance to all night; then no one gets much sleep.

252 You yourself retire into the hut set aside for you, your mind full of the new impressions received during the day. How long you have been asleep you do not know, but suddenly you are aware of a dull, thudding noise. Can it be a drum in the distance? No. It is too regular. Again you hear thud, thud, thud. You look at the time. It is 2 a.m. You try to go to sleep; but the unknown beat is too disturbing, so you go outside to investigate. Some shadowy figures are moving at one end of the village. Women stamping! It is the women you watched in the morning, finishing the last process in their stamping. You wonder how they can see; but the night is, after all, not so dark and the meal is very white. Moreover, soon the moon will be up. The meal is stamped, then, by means of a circular movement of a flat basket, the finer grains are separated from the coarser again and again till the flour is fine enough to pass through the fine mesh of a European sieve, though in a few kraals one still finds even the last process being done by means of a basket. Later, when the sun becomes hot, the meal will be spread out to dry on mats or rocks, if any are conveniently near, or in baskets. If the women finish their stamping before dawn, they may go back to bed, as you have decided to do.

805 Such is the everyday life in a Lovedu village. There are, however,
241 important differences from one season to another, for Lovedu life is in
221 much closer harmony with nature than ours. The Native himself divides the seasons into three: *khilewo*, the time of hoeing, which is reckoned from about September to January; *letawula*, or summer, from about February to the end of May, the time when foods are plentiful; and *maria*, or winter, from June to the end of August. With the introduction of the plough, the planting season has been curtailed and the season of reaping prolonged. Whereas in the old days hoeing and the planting of advance crops in wet places began as early as September, to-day, even if the rains come early, nothing is done until November, more particularly because crops planted earlier are more prone to be attacked by the stalkborer. Consequently we shall consider November as the opening of the seasonal calendar. It must, however, be remembered that division of the year into seasonal activities is somewhat artificial, for activities overlap and life is never directed to one single object. Individuals often pursue their own ends, despite the general activities prevailing, and at all times there is great diversity.

241 During the ploughing and planting season, November to February,
221 there are not many people, other than children and the aged, to be found in the villages. Workers set out early to begin work in the fields, their

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food as often as not being brought to them there. Sometimes the women take with them cobs of mealies preserved by being cooked and dried in the summer months, which they have softened by boiling again before use. In stony places and along steep hillsides, where ploughing is impossible, hoeing is to-day still done by hand. Here one can generally see mealie meal spread out to dry near at hand, out of reach of the fowls and goats that would play havoc with it at home, where there is no one to watch it. For it is chiefly the women that hoe while the men plough. Bushes or branches that have grown out from tree stumps in the fields are cut in readiness for planting, and a typical feature of this time of the year is the small fires in the fields every day towards sunset, when dry mealie stalks that have been collected in heaps are burned. Relishes have been reduced to a minimum, blackjacks (*Bidens pilosa*), *thathe* (*Amaranthus Thunbergii*) and *mufye* (*Solanum nigrum*) being the mainstay, and cooking is done only once a day. There are no nuts or mealies to roast or eat casually, and in years of scarcity this is the time when the pinch of hunger is felt. At night people retire early to bed, tired from the hard work of planting and, later, weeding during the day. Dancing is rare; there is no time for social activities, all energy being directed towards getting the crops planted. Beer parties there are, chiefly work parties for weeding, but they are not as frequent now as in winter. As yet few cases of malaria will have come to light; it is rather the season of dysentery and of cuts and bruises received in hoeing. As the season advances, the first termites make their appearance to relieve the monotony of relish of blackjack leaves, the grass grows longer and weeding becomes imperative.

As a relief to the dullness of the planting season comes the *morula* season, which marks the first two months of 'summer' (February and March) and which from the point of view of seasonal activities can be looked upon as a distinctive period. Everything is green; the grass stands high and weeding is the order of the day, for rain is plentiful. Masses of golden *morula* fruits are falling to the ground. Green mealies from the first-planted fields are beginning to be eaten, spinach of male pumpkin flowers and, later, leaves, make porridge cakes more interesting; and there are sugar-cane and dishes of unripe monkey nuts. People have looked forward eagerly to this time. They are tired of their work and, though much weeding and mounding of *sugo* beans has still to be done, the exultation grows as the cider begins to appear. To those whose granaries are empty, the *morula* season brings a blessed relief from the pangs of hunger, and they drink it as if it were the elixir of life. Much of the day is spent in the fields where the cider is prepared, and from under the trees there is a mighty hubbub of voices. At nightfall, when they return as from a bacchanalian festival, there are opportunities for romantic intrigues, the result rather of exhilaration than of the reputed aphrodisiac effects of the cider. Soon the air is rent by songs and drumming of the possessed, who at this season receive medicine to eat with the *morula* and other green foods of summer. And as the *morula* season draws to a close, the green foods of summer become more plentiful and the beginning of reaping activities ushers in the rich abundance of late summer.

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Men have begun to suffer the penalty of reckless exposure to mosquitoes, especially after nightfall in the valleys where *murula* cider was drunk. Leaky huts and damp clothes have brought coughs, rheumatism and perhaps pneumonia. There is disease even among the cattle, which are attacked by the ticks that abound in the high grass. But these things cannot outweigh the pleasures of abundant relishes and summer fruits. April (*Thudanzhi*—the month when women ask you to help them lift (*ku vula*) the load from their heads) is indeed worthy of its name. Each afternoon the women come home with basketfuls of pumpkins, green mealies, nuts and relish. Careful housewives are drying relishes for winter while those whose weeding or mounding is up to date make tasty cakes of ground corn, monkey nuts, or the date-like fruits of the *mashkoma* tree (*Berchemia discolor*). The receptacles for storing have to be renewed for the reception of the new harvest, storage enclosures strengthened and sledges repaired. Men are to be seen daily going out to cut poles or grass, which the women carry home in enormous bundles on their heads. Soon reaping begins. The sesamum is first pulled up, then the groundnuts. Millet and kaffir corn are reaped next, lest the birds create too much havoc in the ripening fields; and, before this has ended, the mealies are garnered, stripped of their sheaths in the fields and carried home in baskets or on sledges. By the end of May, reaping and the threshing of kaffir corn and eleusine, usually done in prepared places in the fields, are in full swing. But in summer people do not, as in the planting season, work much in the mornings, except in working parties. Cooking is first finished and only after about eleven o'clock do the people go out to their fields. The men, especially those lucky enough to have no huts to renew or repair, have more leisure now, and there are daily orgies of beer-drinking. The abundance and variety of food make people forget that there might be a shortage later in the year, coming as a climax to reckless consumption and social activity. This is the time that people begin to compete in great friendly *guba*-dancing displays and carry beer to relatives-in-law. Towards the end of July, when the herdboys turn the cattle to graze on the mealie stalks, there are echoing calls of joy, for soon they will not be herding at all. Grazing near home marks the beginning of the play-housekeeping of boys and girls in the reaped fields at the end of the season.

In contrast to the planting season, when the problem is to put in one's seeds betimes, reaping-time allows of a variety of other activities. From May, therefore, there are not only dances and much beer-drinking, but there is time for the plying of crafts, such as pottery, mat-making, basket-making. For the specialist in any craft is always primarily an agriculturalist who plies his craft only when he has time, and it is in vain that anyone approaches even the most skilled craftsman for an object during the planting or weeding season. Once the summer rains have stopped, courtyard walls are re-plastered and hut-building is possible. The period from August to the end of October when the fields are bare and the grass has dried is *mudulahae* ('the time of sitting at home'), three months of leisure so dear to the Lovedu. Though many people are still winding up the work of the year, building and thatching, threshing and

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CHAPTER III

BASES OF SUBSISTENCE

The agricultural complex of activities—culture-change adjustments, and problems of malnutrition, education, and division of labour in agriculture—the place in the society, and present-day problems, of animal husbandry—modern threats to the interest in the vegetation as a basis of subsistence.

241 231 222 824 262 THE Lovedu are great agriculturalists and poor pastoralists. They have a vast knowledge of the vegetation, which constitutes the best example of a science among them. It is a science closely related to their everyday lives and upon which they rely, even more than upon their cattle, goats, pigs, and fowls, for their subsistence. They eat the fruits and roots of the plants, depend for their relishes upon leaves and soft stems, and in dozens of other ways nourish themselves upon the natural products of the soil. Not agriculture and animal husbandry alone, but these, together with wild fruits, woods, and other products of nature, are the bases of subsistence.

These bases are all fundamental, but they have different value in different aspects of the culture. Agriculture is most important as a source of the substantial foods; natural fruits provide relishes and variety, and as a means of nutrition are much more prominent than domestic animals. Cattle and goats are primarily not food at all; their great role lies in supporting the social structure. In considering the sources of the primary needs of man, we should get a wholly distorted picture if we omitted the natural vegetation, the use of which as food, in economic pursuits, and in medicine is one of the most impressive features of Lovedu culture. Tillage and animal husbandry presume an extensive practical knowledge of soils, crops, and grasses; but this body of knowledge takes second place beside the imposing science at the basis of handicrafts, natural foods—indeed, the whole medical, nutritional, and economic structure of the society.

008 Nature is not merely a physical fact; it is a living reality, an integral part of the culture. Environment is not something apart from man and his needs; it is the medium in which he lives and breathes. And it is [824] their direct reliance on nature that makes the Lovedu so strikingly different from us, just as their everyday knowledge of the names, qualities, and uses of trees, bushes, and all kinds of plants so greatly overshadows the corresponding knowledge of ordinary men among us. We, who live in a world in which nature satisfies our primary needs in a roundabout manner, cannot easily realize how different conditions are in a world where the satisfaction is direct. We are often inclined to picture primitive man as engrossed in ritual pageant unrelated to, and unserviceable for, the major ends of human existence. It is very necessary to correct this view. It is often thought that sex, magic, and witchcraft absorb most of the time, activities, and interests of primitive man. But, at all events among the Lovedu, more time and energy is spent, more interest centred,

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on getting food, shelter, and the material comforts—in short, on a pragmatic adjustment to nature by the application of empirical knowledge—than on any other aspect of their culture.

The agricultural complex of activities is the end to which the major portion of the people's resources in land, labour, power, capital, and economic energies are directed. For success, practical knowledge of the environment is of the first importance. A feeling of security is attained in agricultural activities, not so much by magical as by empirical means. Skill, experience, close observation, hard work—these are the primary requisites. The struggle to make the soil yield up its fruit is not conceived to be waged or determined by mysterious forces. This does not mean that a European will be impressed by their methods of tillage. Their conditions of life, their technology, their control over nature are different from ours. The manner in which people invest their energies and draw out their rewards does not conform to our ideas of efficiency. We deplore the poor tillage, wonder at the wastefulness during periods of plenty, inveigh against thoughtless improvidence. Lack of intelligence, we say, is the reason for their lack of systematic planning against recurrent famine. But we forget, among other things, that practices based on shifting cultivation, though unsuitable in the new, crowded environment, are still alive; that the problems of storage against the ravages of termites and weevils have not been solved and, with the materials at the disposal of the Native, cannot be solved even by our experts; and that, in the absence of organized exchange and marketing facilities, there is no incentive to produce more than for the annual needs of the household plus the surplus for beer-making necessary to maintain social relations and one's reputation for generosity. Practices which ramify into the cultural structure cannot be changed, costly new materials for combating pests cannot be acquired, nor can a whole superstructure of economic distribution be built up at a moment's notice. While the old values that gave men confidence and sustained the society continue to survive as they do, it is they which will regulate the application of knowledge and resources. A man may wish to increase his food supply, but not at the price of giving up too many of the things valued in the society; a surplus beyond a certain limit means nothing and suggestions for an improvement in methods may thus fall on deaf ears.

We can here refer only cursorily to a few aspects of Lovedu agriculture. There are, firstly, the various crops. In modern times, mealies are considered the most important and are the staple crop on the hills, where they also have the first claim on the best soils. It is eleusine, however, the oldest of the Lovedu grains, that is given to the gods. But no one, so say the old men, must neglect kaffir corn (*Sorghum caffrorum*) and millet (*Pennisetum typhoides*), for upon them greater reliance can be placed in times of drought. In the valleys, despite their vulnerability to the ravages of birds, more of these latter two crops are planted than mealies, largely because they do not answer on the hills. Cereals are cultivated by both men and women; and, in addition, every woman plants also *njugo* beans (*Voandzeia subterranea*), peanuts (*Arachis hypogea*), pumpkins, native beans (*Vigna sinensis*) and *mung* beans

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(*Phaseolus aureus*). Several varieties of sugar-cane (sweet sorghums) are planted on the boundaries of fields or between the other crops.

Njugo beans are ancient groundnuts which require a good deal of attention by way of mounding, restrictive taboos and careful pulling up, although they are very welcome as a change of diet. In this respect they resemble peanuts, which were popularized by the Shangana-Tonga not so long ago. These nuts sometimes answer well where other crops have failed; in certain years they may flourish while the cereals wither in the sun. Then you may hear people say, but it is only by way of joking among the Lovedu, that the Shangana-Tonga witches have called the cereals to undergo circumcision (*hu tba*). Some people in the valleys are half-inclined to believe the claims that the Shangana-Tonga make for their witches, because it is undoubtedly uncanny that, when the nuts succeed the cereals fail, and vice versa. But usually the claim is ascribed to the desire of these outcast people to assert their importance—the Lovedu know nothing of inferiority complexes, but they are shrewd judges of human nature.

Sesamum used to be popular in the valleys and is said to be an old crop of the Roka. But peanuts have ousted this wholesome, albeit very troublesome, crop. You will be told that the reason lies in the growing laziness of people; this is a reason given for the neglect of many other old crops, but in truth we have here merely a shift in the application of the available resources. A delightful commentary on some of the values of the society, though we must warn the reader not to judge them from our standpoint, is the name *lenonya-oadimo*, 'sesamum of the gods'. It is a wild variety, unsuitable for human consumption, but good enough for the gods. It is not given to the gods, yet it reminds one of the sprouted eleusine merely mixed with water that is offered to the gods with the words, 'This is not water. Truly it is beer.'

There are other crops and the variety furnishes a well-balanced diet. But that is not considered to be the virtue of variety. A food is good if it fills. That is why they prefer their hard cakes of porridge to our watery oatmeal. They are inured to that feeling of fullness since the day of their birth, when Grandmother rammed porridge down their throats. But there is comfortable fullness and uncomfortable fullness—that after a good porridge meal and that after eating too much *njugo* bean. The stomach is not insensible to certain distinctions, though they are not our distinctions. Filling is not the only virtue of a food. Some foods relieve the monotony of the round of porridge and blackjacks, and some are tasty dishes or rare delicacies. But no one thinks of the virtues of a balanced diet, for nutritive and protective qualities of foods are not recognized. The old diet, simple though it might be from our point of view, was sufficiently varied to maintain people in good health; but it is not realized that, precisely because it was so simple, even a small change might eliminate essential ingredients. That change has not yet come among the Lovedu, but it is near at hand. Subsidiary crops are becoming more popular. You still see cowpeas, mung beans, water melons, even carrots, sweet potatoes, and native beans. Yet, on the whole, what is most impressive is the growing reliance upon cereals and pumpkins, and the

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neglect of many of the old crops. The balance may be restored by European vegetables, such as tomatoes, cabbage, onions, and carrots. They are planted in irrigated gardens; these, however, are not numerous and could never supply the needs of the whole population. The parsimonious peasant, well-filled with porridge, is hardly likely to spend much time on what are looked upon as luxuries rather than as necessities.

People know that to have many crops in the same field places a great strain on the soil and lowers the productivity of each crop. Yet as a measure of economy, dictated by conditions, every one to-day plants side by side as many different crops as possible. Eleusine is an exception and mealies are spared the worst mixtures, though it is rare indeed that in between the mealies you will not find pumpkins and nuts. Millet and kaffir corn, however, stand alongside sweet sorghums—in the old days planted only on the boundaries of fields—beans and groundnuts, pumpkins, and calabashes. There is no more virgin soil on which the old incipient ideas of rotation of crops can be practised. If by chance new soil is turned, its rich content of ash will no longer be placed at the service of eleusine, as was the old rule; mealies, which followed eleusine as a second crop, are now so much more important that the old priority of eleusine gives way to a mixed crop of mealies and eleusine, though mealies alone are preferred. When mealies, after two or three years, begin to answer badly, millet is planted, in accordance with the old rotation. To-day there is some idea that beans revitalize the soil.

But we must not exaggerate the scientific value of these principles. Rotation was essentially a method of draining from the soil, with more and more hardy crops, the last ounce of energy; a crop was not thought to recondition the soil. On soil that is too poor or unsuitable for any of the cereals, groundnuts are often successful; but usually it is left to lie fallow for many years. In the old days it might have been wholly abandoned; but to-day lands that have lain fallow for thirty years and more are being recultivated, at least if they are not along the steep or stony slopes of hills where ploughing is difficult. The shifting cultivation of the past is no longer possible; there are less men available for clearing, which, moreover, has for long been discouraged by the tribe itself and to-day is forbidden by Governmental regulation. Plough culture also has introduced new practices. These and other changes have had far-reaching results. Time and space for single-crop gardens are lacking. It is convenient and the most economic utilization of the available resources to put into the soil behind the plough a mixture of all kinds of seeds. Some of them will be smothered by the others and that will be a calamity if the staple crops suffer unduly; for that reason the problem now is to determine, with reference to soil and weather conditions, which crops will significantly lessen the productivity of those to which priority is accorded. Everything that requires to be planted separately is as far as possible left aside. Crops specially planted by women tend to fall behind in the race. Women do most of the hoeing to-day, and their labour, valuable as it is on the steep slopes and among the stones, cannot keep pace with the plough. Moreover, men make the modern gardens by the sides of streams, and the many beans, groundnuts, and native potatoes, which the women

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241 178 planted, disappear before the advance of European vegetables. This is as yet not a great change, because there are very few of these gardens, and it is far beyond present resources to construct irrigation furrows.

The balance is also upset by other tendencies. Agriculture is still a vital interest, but others are beginning to compete with it, and the various cultural devices by which interests were massed behind the various stages of agriculture are no longer as effective as formerly. Mobilization of energies by the seasonal calendar and their concentration at the strategic points of time and place are only partially effective. The unfolding of nature, the increasing signs of the coming spring, the more and more auspicious banking up of the thunder-clouds used to be like the culmination of intensive propaganda playing upon the emotions of the people. As the first rains fell and the scent of the veld rose to men's nostrils, they seemed to liberate internal secretions which drove men to action; and the example of the first workers in the fields made the impulse irresistible. But to-day, though much of this is in evidence and one still sees an impulsive restlessness canalized into productive activity, the reactions are, according to Native accounts, much weaker. Neither internal secretions, if such there are, nor suggestion in a tense situation have their old overpowering effect.

[461] Translation of the impulses aroused into useful action is to some extent inhibited by enervating listlessness, at least among a proportion of the people. They are people puzzled by the changes around them or caught in the vicious circle of malnutrition and weakened incentives. They seek solutions in smaller exertions, lotus-like inactivity, and excessive beer-drinking; and in the hierarchy of ideals, these values are beginning to become unduly prominent. It would be disastrous if they created a cultural pattern, as the tendency suggests, in which agricultural work is mere drudgery and people concentrate upon easy crops, thus over-simplifying a wholesome simplicity in food and, as a cumulative result, [146] not fulfilling, but draining the joys of life. Even to-day, weakened by [164] unbalanced nutrition, many more people succumb to tuberculosis, [754] bilharzia, tape-worm, even dysentery and malaria; as disease spreads and shakes the sense of security, sorcery and witchcraft become more common interpretations, and men must rely upon magic to restore their confidence. It is in agricultural practices that some of the greatest changes have occurred in the society. But, as will be seen, the changes are not of a simple nature.

These are the tendencies; but we must remember that the foundations of the society are deeply laid and the tensions are evident only in the upper superstructure. The people have a remarkable capacity for making adjustments, at least when no profound social arrangements are affected. They have adopted new crops, changed from hoe to plough cultivation, and adjusted themselves from unlimited to limited land. Unfortunately, they do not as yet have faith in manure. They have seen, they say, that manure raises an excess of weeds and that for *njugo* beans it is useless, even dangerous. One cannot appeal to the value of medicine, because only witches 'doctor' their fields, not indeed to fertilize them, but to steal the crops of their neighbours. Garden magic is never

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legitimate, for men rely upon their labours and place their faith in the rain, the making of which is the prerogative of the queen.

Failure of one's crops is attributed, not to witchcraft, but in a bad year to the heat of the sun and in normal seasons to indolence or bad soil. In the last resort, however, when every one suffers equally, or when there is a major drought, the calamity is regarded as a punishment by the gods, who 'hold the arms of the queen', or by the queen herself, who is displeased in her heart. Diseases and pests are not magical visitations. Though called 'the witch of the mealies' because it saps their strength, witchweed (*Wormskioldia longipedunculata*) is neither sent by witches nor combated by supernatural means. Destructive insects and parasites, such as stalkborers, weevils, and caterpillars, are regarded, not as being 'sent', but as perfectly natural results of untimely planting or unseasonal rain. Birds, monkeys, rats, and mice are, generally speaking, combated by the practical means at the disposal of man, such as trapping or scaring. Numerous other precautions are taken: one does not plant millet unless one's neighbours do likewise, because when there are many fields, all, not merely one, will be at the mercy of predatory birds; people favour bird-proof corns, though they are harder to thresh; late-maturing crops, whatever their productivity, are discarded in favour of those ripening early, because they cannot be reaped before the cattle start their unrestricted grazing; and a much-favoured peanut, which is also easy to reap, is liable to sprout unless special precautions are taken. In short, the problems of agriculture are tackled in a practical manner.

This does not mean that a practical demonstration of the superiority of new methods will always have the desired effect. Agricultural demonstrators have made very little impression. It is often thought that this is due to the improvidence, lack of ambition, and innate conservatism of the 'savage'. A farmer will tell you that, after years of experience on his farm, his Native labourers go home to practise their primitive, wasteful methods. The trouble is not savage incapacity, but the incongruity of our ways, our technology, and our ideals with theirs. The demonstrator is like a teacher speaking a foreign language and working with material and concepts which do not exist in the society. He often is wholly ignorant of the background of belief. His education makes him unduly scornful of savage superstitions, instead of using them to advantage. In agriculture, among the Lovedu, there is one practice we might call superstition. It is *hu upa*, a method of safeguarding crops with medicine against the depredations of birds and monkeys. It is quite harmless, absorbs little of the time or energy of the few children who scatter the medicine, and does not preclude the use of other, more empirical methods. There is no need to waste eloquence upon eradicating a practice which strengthens the interest of the children in agriculture, causes no slackening in their scaring activities from the platforms erected in the fields, and, in the last resort, is an effective psychological device; for it equalizes the struggle of man against nature and maintains at the requisite intensity the confidence which enables him to strive hopefully against his difficulties.

Practical knowledge is undoubtedly the weapon with which demonstrators should combat progressive degeneration in agriculture; but it is

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241 177 not practical knowledge applied from our point of view; it must be from their point of view. Instruction must be articulated with their practices and techniques; it must take into account their arrangements and their rhythm of life. The knowledge imparted must be applicable to their conditions and be linked with the instruments at their disposal. For the dietician to extol the virtues of a new crop, for the doctor to show that bacteria more readily enter where resistance is lowered by deficiencies in food, even for the agricultural demonstrator using his superior implements to demonstrate the practicability of the crop—all this is very nearly fruitless. These things will have their value when they can be fitted into the Native's world of thought and technology. In the meanwhile, the execution of our plans, sound though they be in theory, is merely causing irritation and resistance.

241 476 178 All the old Lovedu cultivation was on the hills or along their slopes and, generally speaking, close relatives, not necessarily relatives through males, had all or some of their fields in large blocks (*demo*). Unlike the Tswana custom, these blocks stood in no relation to the social organization; the land was not pointed out by the chief and its size was not predetermined, but depended upon the energy of the individual cultivators. The *demo* was a matter of convenience and utility: the concentration facilitated co-operation in clearing the fields, economized the labour necessary for protecting the gardens, and made mutual assistance in hoeing and weeding much easier. No doubt the arrangements also mobilized incentives and added to the joys of life. There is to-day nothing left of these blocks. The old ones have inevitably fallen into the hands of more and more scattered people and no new ones can be created because large blocks of land are no longer available. The tendency towards dispersal and fragmentation was still further emphasized when Shangana-Ṭonga cultivation proved the fertility of the valleys. To-day a man must take land where he can find it, and though the Lovedu still live on the hills, they have their lands scattered all over the country. Indeed, since it is easier to plough on level ground, the hills are liable to be neglected, though wisdom dictates that it is best to have fields in two different environments. The result is that a man's fields are widely separated, sometimes being as far as ten miles apart.

241 462 The old division of labour in agriculture between the sexes was not uneven; both men and women hoed, weeded, and reaped. Only men cleared the forest, but against that only women cultivated certain crops, such as groundnuts. The old pattern is still more or less maintained, at least in principle. But cultivation by the plough has changed matters. Men look upon hoeing as the work of women, although the old ideal so much survives that they despise the Shangana-Ṭonga because their menfolk neither hoed nor weeded in the past. To-day hoeing and weeding among the Lovedu fall largely upon the women, and ploughing almost exclusively upon the men. This is not a fair division of labour; it might be fairer if the other activities of men, such as hunting and public life, had not become greatly attenuated. For the women are always busy, and their work is more monotonous than that of the men, who, despite the labour migration to the towns, have much more leisure than women.

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More thorough ploughing and a revival of the interest men used to have in agriculture would make the balance swing evenly. A man should not feel, as he tends to do to-day, that he pulls his full weight if he goes out periodically to earn wages, ploughs the fields, discusses cases, and builds huts. He has plenty of time to take a larger part in agriculture, as he did in the old days and as many of the older men still do.

Ploughing has brought about many other changes. It has necessitated clearing of the stumps and stones, and broken down to a large extent the old contour-terracing. This has accelerated erosion, which was in any case inevitable owing to the overstocking, just as overstocking is inevitable, not because men keep many cattle, but because of the density of the population. Erosion impoverishes the soil and over-use exhausts it. The result is that the initial benefits of the plough, which made larger gardens and better cultivation possible, are gradually being turned into liabilities. Every one will tell you that crops are more abundant to-day than in the old days; but the price is already heavy, and as the quality of the soil gets worse it will be increasingly heavier. Variety, the single-crop field, rotation of crops have gone. The planting season is much later and less concentrated in the months of October to December than in the oid days, for ploughing is a rapid process as compared with hoeing, and one can avail oneself of good rains even as late as the middle of February. Late ploughing is not always deliberate; the small number of available ploughs and, more serious, the inadequacy of the draught animals, are equally responsible. The distribution of these resources is effected by various forms of co-operation, mostly partnerships in which one supplies labour, another the plough, and still another the cattle or donkeys. These partnerships, though patterned upon old forms of co-operation, have to take account of new factors, economic rather than social, and lead to new alinements in the society. Overstocking and ploughing have contributed to the silting up with useless sand of the old riverside gardens. Their original purpose, which was to tide men over the scarcity in the months November to February, partly fell away when ploughing brought a measure of abundance, but now that the old needs are reasserting themselves these gardens are destroyed. In their place the new Europeanized gardens, irrigated by furrows along the upper stretches of the smaller streams, have arisen, but the incentives that stimulate this new experiment are somewhat different: the gardens are for profit, not for providing an advance crop. The effects of ploughing may be pursued in many directions: it has emphasized the economic as against the purely social value of cattle, at the same time eliminating milk from the diet of adults; it has to some extent militated against husbanding the food resources; it has stimulated excessive drinking of beer; and it has released a large amount of energy for which there is little creative outlet.

For the present, agriculture is in unstable equilibrium. Every adult still has his own field, but the extreme limit of land available for cultivation has been reached. Limitation of stock can no longer ease the situation, as the chief evil is not overstocking but over-population. About 80 per cent. of the entire soil is arable land, at present or in the near past put under cultivation; as much as 80 per cent. of this land is

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241 [311] annually tilled, though the actual extent varies considerably according to the vagaries of the weather, the surplus in the granaries, the availability of implements and animals, and other factors. We do not think that in present conditions the absence of man-power in the towns is a material 241 464 factor. On the contrary the man-power available is more than sufficient as long as present methods are employed. The introduction of the plough has liberated more energy than is absorbed by work among Europeans; the number of inactive men has increased rather than decreased. It is the shortage of animals and implements, rather than of men, that is most impressive. Even European labour and European ploughs and cattle are employed by the Natives; they come from the neighbouring farms and can do the work more economically than the Native with his inadequate resources. But it is not lack of human material, it is the impossibility of making the ploughs and animals go round, that necessitates such ex- 241 pedients. In the companies and partnerships, those who contribute the 476 essentials, the cattle or the ploughs, are the dominant partners, and the others must often wait until late in the season before their needs can be attended to. The partnerships thus lead to tensions and strife, and hiring of services is becoming more popular. Yet on the whole the system works with remarkable smoothness. If it worked perfectly, the Natives would realize much more forcibly that it is not lack of industry that, as they think, is at the bottom of their troubles, but the inadequacy of the land and of their material resources.

231 Although animal husbandry ranks as a very poor second economic activity, it is still of sufficient importance to warrant a few remarks even in such a general account as this. Pastoral activities are not arduous; in the old days they were worthy of the metal of adult men who went armed to herd the cattle and supervised the milking. But to-day children herd [422] and there are practically no cows to be milked. Cattle are individually owned both by men and women, but the kind of ownership, except in the case of some 15 per cent., is entirely different from what we understand by the word. For the vast majority of cattle are linked to the chain of *munywalo* (bride-price) exchanges and as such the individual's rights over them are subject to many restrictions. The primary value to the [262 Natives of cattle is not economic, but social; he regards cattle as food 782] only in the last resort, though there is no taboo against killing them. Cattle are not killed as sacrifices. Ownership of cattle is not the chief or [554] even a very important method of reckoning status. A man will complain, not because he has no cattle, but because he cannot brew beer to maintain his prestige. The dung of cattle is used for smearing, cattle that die are eaten, and cattle are killed in time of starvation so that the meat can be exchanged for mealies. But cattle are, generally speaking, much too large units of value to be of use in economic exchanges. Finally, the needs of cattle do not determine the routine of the day. They are taken out late, after the dew has dried and the herdboys have had their morning meal; and they come back almost unnoticed without disturbing the arrangements of the village. In a sense, however, their needs set limits to the harvesting season; crops which are not reaped by the beginning of July are practically at their mercy. Yet, despite all this, cattle are regarded

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work accomplished than if one had beer made at the cost of 10s. worth of corn, not to mention the time, labour, and firewood that is consumed in preparing the beer. The motive is, however, not economic but social. *Majema* are used, not for long and difficult tasks only, but also for light work, which a man can easily do himself without help. The aim in these cases is not so much to complete the work quickly—time is rarely a matter of importance—as to be credited with generous impulses and to have a pleasant social event. Christians, with their more Europeanized outlook, averse from the waste entailed, and fearing excommunication by the Church, which prohibits beer, nevertheless find it hard not to conform to this custom.

Another form of co-operation is the *khilɛbɛ* (*jɛbɛ*, a hoe). Uncommon to-day in its original form, it has its essentials preserved in ploughing partnerships, the so-called 'stock fair' in towns and particularly in the collective agricultural work of young girls. The co-operating group, defined by convenience and proximity of domicile, is largely a local one and consists mainly of close relatives, both on the mother's and on the father's side. The group is still comparatively stable, as it was in the old days, when it had its basis in common interests and common needs. Its members collectively reaped or weeded or hoed one another's fields, completing one field and then going to the next, and each arranged about his own food. Kin or neighbours had their lands closer together and less split up than to-day; they started their various tasks at much the same time; there was safety in concentration, and economy in co-operation. The great distinction between *khilɛbɛ* and *lejema* was and still is that no beer is provided; but, as in the *lejema*, the *khilɛbɛ* partnership lessened the monotony of arduous work and mobilized energies and incentives. As the group was smaller and more closely khit, relied more tangibly upon reciprocity and had more elements of continuity, the stimulus of beer was not necessary to hold it together. Each partner remained an individualist, for the crops were not shared; but each realized the value of mutual helpfulness and the necessity of minimizing the self in relation to the ends of others.

To-day the conditions of the operation of the *khilɛbɛ* no longer exist in their old form. Fields have become split up; the old dangers are no more; the plough has vastly decreased man's dependence upon the help of his kin or his neighbour. Though it was perhaps the most potent agent of destruction of the old *khilɛbɛ*, the plough has become the centre of the new. The household, which is the economic unit, hardly ever has ploughs, animals, and workers all available at the same time; only 30 per cent. of such units possess ploughs and only 15 per cent. have cattle or donkeys. Thus cultivation calls for some form of co-operation, and the form which was familiar was the *khilɛbɛ*. There are new elements in the situation, but their co-ordination was effected by drawing upon pre-existing patterns of co-operation. Typically the *khilɛbɛ* in ploughing consists of four partners, representing four economic units: one supplies the animals, a second the plough, the third some of the workers, and the fourth the herdboy, who looks after the cattle during the year and might wield the whip or plant behind the plough. The emphasis

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is upon the sharing of tools rather than upon that sharing of services which characterized the old *khilcbc*. But in the old institution hoes were borrowed from one another and the differentiation of to-day was not unknown, though it took a different form. The organization implies a person-to-person adjustment rather than institutionalized leadership, except that he who provides the animals sometimes tends to dictate whose lands have first to be ploughed. No payment passes, however unequal the contributions or needs of the partners, and sometimes an old widow is a partner who can contribute nothing at all. The essence of the whole institution is a complete disregard of the exact equivalences of the contributions or of the services.

This form of co-operation, in which mutual helpfulness and reciprocity and not economic advantage are stressed, finds expression in many activities. Among Christians there are potters who club together; usually they are kin who live in the same settlement. The only work they share is the excavation of the clay; each works quite independently of the other, though advice is exchanged. Men often build *ga khilcbc* instead of *ga lejema*, but in this case the association is a very loose one, consisting merely of the available friends or relatives in or near the village; and though some small gift is given by the owner of the hut built, the main feature of the co-operation is a sense of mutuality and reciprocity. The conception of mutual helpfulness recedes before that of profit when, as is becoming more common, the person for whom the work is done pays a reward in money. Curious anomalies occur, because sometimes less, sometimes more, consideration is given to the exact money equivalence of the services rendered. Where a man considers that he is paying wages for services, he usually models his behaviour upon his conception of the European employer and the whole pattern of reciprocity falls to the ground. But this model is very unpopular, though for the employer it has distinct advantages; as he contracts for the labour, he can requisition it when he wants it and can control its execution. He is no longer an equal partner, but a foreman.

One development of the *khilcbc* which is seen in townships is the 'stock fair'. It is practicable only where each of the partners periodically receives cash wages. Every month one of the partners, taken in rotation, is entitled to a fixed amount from each of the others, the purpose being to make available to every one in turn a fairly large sum of money. Though the partners wear some distinctive dress, the association is very unstable and many as a result suffer loss. The 'stock fair', far though it be removed from the *khilcbc*, is thus based on a generalization from past experience in which social ends are attained by the application of rule-of-thumb principles, with little resort to trial and error and little dependence on organizing ability or on individual leadership.

With the various forms of co-operation, we may briefly contrast solitary occupations and services. It is somewhat unusual for any one alone to undertake a large task, and among heathens it is rarer still for an individual to hire out his services. There is no real domestic service; even in the royal household, *vulada* is very different from service in our sense of the term. The *mulada*, usually an orphan, is the ward of his

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paid in salt and the other commodities mentioned. But the practice is, except for payment in meat, largely confined to Christians. As far as it exists, it completely alters the old long-run reciprocity pattern. There is no social feast. Collective replaces co-operative activity; for personal profit, not sociability, is the prime motive; the social gala is converted into a labour situation, and the interests of employer and employee begin to diverge. Room for roundabout recipocity is narrowed; instead of the indefinite mutuality upon which a man who helps others to-day may rely in the future, he receives an immediate and individual reward; faith in long-range equivalence of services and obligations gives way to a desire for direct personal satisfaction.

To the new situation, in which the *lejema*-giver corrects and directs and the worker obeys and submits, imperfect adjustments have been made. Direction, hitherto unknown in the economic relations of equals, degenerates to exploitation; the answer to unwilling submission is resentment; and the employer is regarded as a renegade and cheat. He is known to buy a bag of salt for 7*s*.—and to distribute it so that each worker receives only one-sixth of the accepted value (1*s*.) of a day's work. The conflict, in which the worker retaliates by calling the employer 'unscrupulous', is only beginning. It may resolve itself by new adjustments, even though an aggravating feature is the fact that it is the Christian who is the budding capitalist and the pagan who is the dependent labourer. From the point of view of progress in agriculture, the danger is that employers are usually progressive, and progress thus comes to stand for anti-social methods. This hampers the work of agricultural demonstrators. It is clear that lasting solutions, even of apparently simple agricultural problems, not to speak of the complicated problems of administration or of wider spheres of culture contact, can be attained only by studying both the forms of the old institutions and psychological reactions among the people to the changes.

Turning to exchanges in the society—that is, purchases and sales, whether cash or kind is transferred—we may consider external and internal trade from the standpoint of whether it falls within a money, money-barter, barter, or gift-barter economy. We use these terms to designate the distinctions mentioned below. *External trade* refers to transactions with people belonging to groups outside or alien to the tribe, such as stores, farmers, and individuals of other tribes. *Internal trade* is largely local, but it may be interlocal when it occurs across the boundaries of the reserve, but between members of the tribe. *Gift barter* is reciprocal gift exchange. There is no exact economic equivalence. Mutuality, goodwill, and reciprocity are the primary considerations, but it is not the same as a gift, for a gift implies no return gift, but merely one-sided donations, such as presents to children. Out-and-out gift is *mpho* (from *hu fa*) and, while such gifts imply indirect mutuality, there is no expectation of a return gift. For our present purposes and in the table given below, they are left out of consideration; it would, for instance, be impracticable to distinguish between feeding one's household and giving them presents. From gift barter must be distinguished *pure barter*, in which the aim is an interchange of goods of equivalent value

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CHAPTER XIII

THE ROLE OF THE ANCESTORS

Ancestral caprices and complaints and rites to appease them—the universe of the ancestors a replica of the everyday world—relations of magic, morality, and religion—possession by spirits as a religion and socio-psychological phenomenon.

NATURE spirits and hero-gods have no place in the Lovedu scheme of things. There is, however, Khuzwane, the creator, who made all things, including men, and left his footprints on certain rocks in the north when these rocks were new and soft. But no one knows what has happened to him and no one ever thinks of him. The gods of the Lovedu are their ancestors, deceased fathers and mothers who guard one in death as they did in life. Each family has its own ancestors, and religious observances are thus peculiarly a family concern.

Ancestors have various attributes. They are one's protectors and no harm can befall one unless they, the ancestors, are neglectful. Witches, powerful as they are, can neither enter the village nor cause sickness without their connivance; hence the procedure in divination, even in the clearest case of witchcraft, of inquiring whether the spirits should be appeased. Disease cannot enter nor epidemics break out if only the ancestors are watchful enough and well-disposed. Again and again one finds this idea expressed in prayers; 'Protect us from epidemics [winds]', they say; while the queen in a prayer at her harvest ceremony put it even more positively: 'As regards life, we have been very well, but now we are being killed by that epidemic which you have allowed to come', referring to smallpox. There can be no success without the co-operation of the ancestors. Medicine cannot help nor doctors heal if the ancestors are not with one. This idea, reminiscent of our 'By the will of God', is expressed in the phrase, 'We do not say our doctor, [will heal]; we say our doctor and the ancestors'. It appears also in a prayer we heard on behalf of an absent son working in town, when a goat, dedicated to his grandmother (father's mother), who had made him ill two years before, was being given the new corn: 'Here is the child; here he is, mother. We ask that you let him be happy and cool (give him health). Tell all the other spirits [certain names mentioned], and we who remain, *we say our thing with the gods.*'

The phrase '*vadimo lalane*' (spirits, sleep) which rounds off so many prayers, and the constant fear of waking up (*hu dzosa*) the ancestors, causing them to stand (*hu ɛma*) and cause trouble, appear at first as a peculiar contradiction, as though people do not wish their gods to be watchful. The term *lala* is, however, idiomatic, expressing peace, things being as they should be, as in the phrase, '*Ha va mulao; shago la lala*' (There was order; the country slept), implying that the rains were good and all was well; while *hu dzosa* in this sense means stirring to anger rather than waking up from sleep.

The ancestors are responsible for the fertility of the crops. True, nothing could grow without rain, for which the queen is responsible and

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769 which royal ancestors only can withhold; differences in the harvest
241 between one area and another are often attributed to fights between the
782 witches of the two areas, and even variations in yield between one man's field and his neighbour's may be due to witchcraft. Yet one finds in prayers many a request for a good harvest, even though there are no special ceremonies devoted to this end. A man pouring a libation for a sick child said among other things, 'Give us corn; when we plough let us also reap. Why are you stinting us?' And it is significant that the only regular religious observance is the harvest offering of beer made of each year's new corn in villages where there are shrines or dedicated animals.

764 When any one dies, there is thought to be danger that the fertility of the crops will depart with him or her. Hence, when a gourd of seeds of every kind is placed in the grave together with a firebrand and calabash of water for the journey, some of the seeds are scattered over the body with the words, 'Do not depart with all the corn and seeds,' and very often the grain belonging to the deceased is treated with medicine in order that it may remain fertile.

769 Above all, the ancestors complain, a fact which lies at the basis of
782 Lovedu religion, for by far the greater proportion of religious rites are those performed in response to ancestral complaints. One might at first think it strange that the gods, in life just ordinary, well-disposed people, should in death be so liable to bring trouble upon their kin. Sometimes it is thought to be a sign of love: when Masilu's grandmother had made him ill because she wanted a goat dedicated to her, his mother said, 'No wonder his *gogo* seized him. She was always so fond of him.' But chiefly it is the nature of ancestors to complain; as the Lovedu phrase it, 'When people sleep (i.e. are dead), they ought to complain' (*Hɛ vathu va khi lala fase va swanɛdɛ hu velɛala*). When there is illness, they are, as it is phrased, 'seen in the divining bones'; it is they who sometimes 'hold' the woman experiencing difficult childbirth, and sometimes, but far less than among the Nguni, their complaints cause dreams. Our close friend

787 Walter, coming to seek work in Johannesburg, dreamt disturbing dreams of his dead father, who appeared to say that he was needed at home. He thereupon returned home and, when he arrived, his mother took him to a doctor, whose bones declared that the dead father was annoyed at not having been told of the journey to town and had to be appeased (*hu phasa*). Walter was well educated, but he had failed in his last examination and felt doubly frustrated. He had great ambitions of reforming the political system of the tribe, from which his education had divorced him, and in town he was dissatisfied that nothing was open to him but the unskilled work of his uneducated compatriots.

769 An ancestor may complain about the way he has been buried, and if he
782 has died far from home, may demand to be 'brought back home' in a
778 ceremony in which, besides the dedication of a beast or goat, a goat is killed and eaten, its bones being buried as though it were a person. But this 'bringing home', involving the making of a shrine, applies only to those dying at a distance and does not resemble the 'bringing home' of the Zulu, among whom it is part of death ceremonial. At times the gods complain of neglect. But in the majority of cases no definite reason for

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In the actual working religion of the Lovedu the commonest and most conspicuous rite is *hu phasa*, consisting of a prayer and the pouring on to earth or *thugula* of a mixture of ground, sprouted grain and water, a mixture colloquially referred to as *muṭaxwa lesclo* (the rinser of the winnowing basket). More rarely *hu phasa* is merely spitting out water in the courtyard to the accompaniment of such prayer. There is no formulated distinction in principle between the two forms; the Lovedu say that the dice decide which is to be used. We found water squirted in illness caused by complaints of the living; in some cases of difficult birth; where in the initiation of a possessed woman the spirit was begged to manifest itself; and in one exceptional instance water was squirted on the face of a corpse addressed in prayer before it was buried (usually the corpse is merely addressed when the grains are put into the grave). The efficacy of *hu phasa*, which is also used magically to render witchcraft ineffectual, appears to lie in its 'cooling' effect. *Hu phasa* is performed in connexion with a large number of cases of illness and bad luck and is the recognized approach in asking for blessings on a journey or an undertaking. Hardly a week passes without some one in the neighbourhood having to *phasa*, and generally the prayer in these cases takes the form of a 'scolding' (*hu rohana*), in which the spirits are asked why they are causing illness and told to be satisfied. One does not *phasa* without also using charms in the mixture to make the spirits forget, and the officiator may be male or female, whomsoever the dice have indicated. Rites of thanksgiving, except for the customary harvest beer, are almost unknown. We came upon such a rite only once when the bachelor brother of Madiṅji returned home after an absence in town of thirty years and she performed *hu phasa* in the presence of the family, saying, 'Spirits of Mambeuli, this is one of your fowls. We thought he was lost; now he is back. Keep him as you have kept the rest of us. If he goes away, let him soon remember and long for his home.'

The only regular offering is the annual harvest beer given to dedicated animals and shrines, though even this may be neglected: the village may be moved without the shrine, or the dedicated animal die without being replaced. We ourselves witnessed the setting up of a shrine and dedicated sheep after twenty years' neglect in the chief house of Sedena. Much more formal than ordinary rites of *hu phasa* is the harvest offering, which may take place any time between July and November, for there is here no rule that the queen should take precedence. The officiator is a woman where possible, the *khadi*, who is specially called to come, and real beer, called *muphaba* and made of eleusine, is prepared for the ceremony. If eleusine is not available, red kaffir corn (*makhaha*) may be used, but no other grain is acceptable to the spirits. In its preparation, which is in the hands of old women or girls below the age of puberty, care must be taken that the eleusine is stamped, not ground on the grindstone, and that none of it is tasted before the gods have been given some. Ordinary beer is tasted to see if it is ready, but *muphaba* is smelt or tested by stirring with a twirler. Though the married women of the village play no part in the religious rites on such occasions, it is the duty of the chief wife in whose courtyard the ceremony will take place to smear with dung the place

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241 782 where they will pour and to carry the beer in the *khiruḓwana* basket used in honour of the gods. The occasion is one of joy. The women have already in all likelihood sung *lesugu* songs special to the occasion amid joyous trillings while preparing the beer and, since in addition to the special beer of the gods much ordinary beer will have been prepared, a wide circle of relatives, including those of the wives, will have been invited.

When the queen held her *thugula* ceremony in August, 1938, Ḓiḓi was despatched at eight o'clock in the morning to fetch home Magoṽo, the cow dedicated to the queen's mother, for the harvest giving should take place fairly early in the day, though in practice the rule is often observed in the breach and we have seen ceremonies take place after midday. As it is not easy to drive home one cow of a herd, all were driven and put into the *khɔrɔ* where every one had gathered. When Magoṽo's hind legs had been tied, the chief wife of Mulogwane, deceased brother of the chief to whose family the queen is *khadi*, appeared carrying in a basket a calabash of beer and the queen's mother's beads (*mudala*, the well-known 'beads of the water'). Pouring some of the beer in a wooden platter, she handed it to the queen, who, holding the beads in her hands, placed it before Magoṽo with the words, 'Here is beer, Magoṽo of Muhale (one of the earliest kings), beer of the new corn. We say, Stop this epidemic (winds) to which you have exposed us. Here, too, are your beads. We see neither people (subjects) nor riches; we see only that poverty which you have left for us.' The cow sipped a little of the beer, whereupon all prostrated themselves in greeting (*hu ɓsha*), while one or two women rent the air with their joyous trillings. Sometimes (but it was omitted on this occasion) the beads are placed round the neck of the cow and left there for the whole day.

The dedicated cow having been untied, all now repaired to the courtyard of the chief wife of Mulogwane, where they sat round the shrine, the queen and sons and daughters near by, wives further away, while the small children were made to kneel on the lower side of the shrine, hands together and palms up. Pouring out beer on the mound, the queen said a prayer similar to the previous one, adding that the gods must tell one another and not leave any one out. Then, drinking a little herself, she placed the calabash on the ground for the next person to take up and drink. Each one in turn placed the gourd on the ground for the next to take up, till all the relatives had drunk, when it was returned to the queen. She drank once more, saying, 'He who gives to the gods must not remain hungry,' and laid the calabash upside down on the mound. The small children lapped up the beer from the ground, and trilling and *hu ɓsha* marked the end of the ceremony.

241 782 533 535 Now pots of beer for the crowd that had gathered were brought out and general drinking began. After a while the men took out the drums and began dancing an old dance, the *matagwa*. Thereafter the women began the sacred *lesugu* songs, to which men and women danced in a ring in the courtyard of the chief wife. The queen herself beat the big drum. It was now near sunset. Suddenly a wail like the bleating of a sheep was heard; another, then another, in the direction of the bush behind the

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village. It was the *zwidjajani*, ancestral spirits come to join in the joy and revelry of the living. They opened the next song and joined in the singing of the women, all in the whistling language which people make out by its tone. Later more beer was brought out and when the *zwidjajani* began a new song no one took any notice. 'If you are drinking beer, what are we to drink', came the wails of the *zwidjajani* and a pot of beer was brought to the bush by councillors. Dancing and singing continued till the small hours of the morning, when the sounds of the *zwidjajani* disappeared in the direction of Maulwi, the burial grove of the dead queens, and the revellers, happy and drunk from beer of the *thugula*, retired to bed. The spirits visit only important members of the royal group and a few other families, but beyond this there are no differences between the harvest giving of the queen and that of other people.

Ritual killings of all kinds are insignificant by contrast with the beer offering. There are, first, killings specially for the ancestors, but they are so rare that many people have never seen them. Secondly, there are occasions when the killings, clearly ritual, are not thought of as an offering or sacrifice, because nothing is given to the ancestors. And, thirdly, there are killings, not associated with ancestors or religion, in which small pieces of meat may nevertheless be set aside to 'tell' (*hu suma*) the gods of some event or to propitiate them. *Hu suma* is a conception somewhat different from our 'offer' or 'give'; it has two connotations as used in ordinary life: it is either merely to inform a superior or, by extension of this idea, to send him a share of something good one has, such as a leg of an animal slaughtered or a calabash of the beer one has brewed. In approaching the gods, sometimes one and sometimes the other conception is uppermost.

The killing which most clearly contains the conception of an offering and the primary purpose of which is propitiation of the gods is the slaughter of a black sheep for rain at the grave of a royal ancestor: the victim is immolated, small pieces of meat cut from all parts of it are set aside for the gods, and all the bones are collected and buried in the grave, together with the stomach contents. Equally stressed, however, is the eating of the meat without salt by the assembled crowd. At the installation of a district head, a beast, referred to as a *thugula*, is killed and, in so far as it is killed in a special manner and morsels of meat set aside for the gods to be cooked and later eaten without salt by children below the age of puberty, it is the vicarious submission of a gift to the ancestors. But the major portion of meat is not ritually eaten nor are the bones collected, for a hind leg is sent to the queen. So little is the 'goat of killing' in marriage ceremonial regarded as an offering or sacrifice that we sought for it in vain in the context of a killing for the ancestors. Yet pieces of meat are laid on the shrine and a prayer offered, though the rest of the meat is not ritually eaten nor are the bones kept. Still further removed from an offering is the goat killed on a death to provide a skin for covering the body: its meat is eaten without salt, and all who partake of it must sleep in the hut of the deceased, but nothing is given to the ancestors and no prayer is offered. On the other hand, though the *lelɔpo* doctor, when killing a goat to treat a patient, sets aside pieces of meat

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1937	
November 12th	A rain-doctor sent to make rain at Mtimkulu's village, a petty Shangana-Tonga chief to the north, who had sent messengers to *lowa* a few days before.
November 14th	A thunderstorm, with very little rain, but a very strong wind, broke in the afternoon.
November 15th	Holiday observed to 'turn back' the rain which has been scattered by the wind.
November 23rd	Rain fell with much lightning, which struck at Khiobeni, one of the districts.
November 25th	There was a thunderstorm in which lightning struck at Khidommamathuka, a sub-area of the capital. The place was treated with medicine and in the evening soft rain fell, but not enough for ploughing.
December 2nd	Real set-in rain fell till the 3rd.
December 4th	Hoeing began.
December 8th	First termites brought, but given to dogs, as carried by girls above the age of puberty.
December 12th	First termites given to rain charms.
December 13th	Holiday.
1938	
January	Period of drought.
January 23rd	Mukupi, an important woman district head, came to speak to the queen, as there had been no rain for three weeks. The sun beat down fiercely and the crops were beginning to shrivel up. Several other district heads came to *lowa* with money.
February 11th	People were consulting doctors about the drought. Bones declared a sacrifice necessary. Councillors approached queen and messenger sent for a black sheep.
February 17th	Kheshidwa, the rain-doctor, called.
February 19th	District head at Muduveni (several farms, but an old area of tribe) came with £1 10s. to *lowa*.
March 1st–4th	*Lepshathele* dance for rain by the Thovolo.
February 22nd	Sacrifice at Maulwi. Some rain fell, but not very much.
March 2nd	Kheshidwa called to put right a grave. This was done on the 4th.
March 7th	Levaga, a district head from the north, came to *lowa* with £2.
April 2nd	Rain fell.

241 Some beliefs associated with the cultivation of *njugo* beans are relevant to our present subject. Among the Lovedu this crop is not planted until the mealies, among which it grows, are 1 ft. high, but this is regarded as a practical measure to prevent injury to the mealies rather than as dictated by the belief, firmly rooted and still put into practice by tribes to the south and south-east of Uulovedu, that *njugo* beans planted too early impede the rain. Only some Lovedu have this belief and no one, as far as we know, acts upon it; nor do the Lovedu pull up the young plants when there is no rain, which the Phalaborwa do, as one Lovedu suggested, because the beans look like hailstones. The Lovedu also say, but again

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as if it were a foreign conception, that no *njugo* beans should be planted during the year following the death of a chief. The association of rain and *njugo* beans seem to belong to a culture complex coming from the south.

The insistence nowadays is upon studying culture change as if it were a phenomenon important only in its relation to European contacts, but there has always been and there still is culture change of a different and, as far as the Lovedu are concerned, more vital nature. Even in the rain cult there have been changes. In the reign of Mujaji II, when the father of Kheshidwa succeeded Ramaralo as rain-maker, he instituted *ku ruma*, a new ceremony of medicating all hoes with *mafugo* before the hoeing of the queen's field of eleusine, a practice which has fallen into disuse with the recent abandonment of the queen's hillside field for one in the valley which can be ploughed. The breaking of taboos is not necessarily a reflection of the breakdown and decay of custom. Indeed, the technique of the rain cult was based on the assumption that taboos were broken. Breaches account for drought and the counteravailing efficacy of the queen's measures explains her reputation and the confidence people have in her. Wrong burials are known to prevent rain, but, since people try to avoid the unpleasant publicity involved in getting *mafugo* for the burial of, say, an abortion or in burying it in a wet place, these wrong burials are always taking place.

Neither European contact nor Christianity has succeeded in breaking down the implicit belief of every member of the tribe in the power of the queen to make rain. True, no Christians take part in ceremonies for rain and some do not believe that such things as wrong burials affect rainfall; but they harmonize the new with the old faith by the rationalization that the queen makes rain with the help of God, for they have all seen and can cite corroborative evidence for the powers of the queen. That the queen herself is honest and genuinely believes not only in her own powers, but also in the outside influences that prevent her from achieving success, can be seen in the reply she gave to the messengers who came on February 19th, 1938, with £1 10s. from a one-time district head in her kingdom to beg for rain. 'Go,' she said, 'and tell the master of Muduveni that we are trying, but things will just not come right' (arrangements were being made for a sacrifice to the ancestors for rain). The money, however, was kept.

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CHAPTER XVI

TRIBAL TRAITS AND ATTITUDES

Harmonizing the bases of social security with outlets for personal expression—the role of beer—moderation as an ideal and in the spheres of sex and authority—preoccupation with the quest for health—attitudinal reaction to the Western world.

121 We have drawn a rough outline of Lovedu culture and have lightly sketched in some of the forms of its institutions. From this has emerged the shape and structure of the society. The picture is, of course, incomplete, but we may perhaps give it tone by filling into the forms the shades of movement and motivation, and character by adding the colour of traits and attitudes. We have to undertake this task without the many forms which we have not sketched at all and, far more serious, without the wider background of surrounding cultures which would throw our picture into true perspective. To make good these omissions at this stage is impossible; all we can do is to orientate ourselves from a few familiar principles which will guide us in presenting our picture of the traits and interests of the Lovedu. These are the principles of man's wish for security, for achievement and for recreation.

Man must feel free to act without undue fear and uncertainty, and society must so order its arrangements that its members feel safeguarded against threats to their welfare; hence we in European society have our insurance systems which reduce the risks of our ventures, our legal sanctions which ensure the fulfilment of our expectations, and our conception of a righteous providence which consoles us in the face of a ruthless fate. Man's striving towards self-expression and recognition must also be satisfied, and society cannot neglect to demarcate spheres for, and to reward, individual achievement, though this is no simple matter because the opportunities that stimulate must be co-ordinated with the stability and security by which men may calculate the probability of the success of their ventures. Man also craves for recreation, adventure, and change from the monotony of those activities that are necessary to keep body and soul together; and here again the avenues that society provides must be integrated with the requirements of security and self-expression. Each society handles and co-ordinates these themes in a different manner; in one society, for instance, achievement is defined in terms of wealth or of ousting a rival; in another, in terms of wisdom or co-operation with others. The manner in which any particular society defines or handles these themes determines the interests, aims, values, and attitudes of its members; and it is from this point of view that we shall attempt to portray the Lovedu.

• 241 Lovedu culture is diversified: it is not like a man motivated by a one-track mind, or a fanatic obsessed by a single overpowering mania. But among its many interests, agriculture takes the first place. More time and energy are given to agricultural than to any other activities; no competing interest will move man to neglect ploughing and reaping, and no

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other way of life can oust it from its general pre-eminent position. The man or woman who is in need of a pot or other article in the busy agricultural season vainly places an order with a craftsman, and 'He who takes a journey in spring must transact all his affairs' (i.e. not only where he goes, but also on the way), for he will not be able to pass by again during that season. 241

Agriculture provides the immediate security of the people, but in turn it relies upon the life-giving rain, the power to make which has been projected upon the queen. The queen is thus the foundation stone of the security of the cultural structure. Her rain-making powers safeguard not only agriculture against the caprices of nature, but the whole country against the attacks of its enemies. The queen is more than that: the method of supplicating for rain has merged with the mechanisms of the social structure and has constructed the bonds with the districts, thus, despite political decentralization, securing the unity of the tribe. And, finally, the elevation of a woman to this exalted position has strengthened the status of women and their important role in the society and has emphasized the virtue of feminine qualities. But the queen is not conceived to be intimately linked with everything in the culture: her position in the *khovi* of the men is weakly institutionalized, she has no immediate contact with the European administration to the interferences of which her powers are doubly vulnerable, and the welfare of the cattle elsewhere, as among the Maṭala and Xanaxwa, ritually brought into relation with the chief, is outside her province. 241 643 182

As rain-maker, the queen controls half the great cosmic forces. Magic may be invoked, the gods propitiated, in the interests and for the ends of individuals, but ultimately these interests and ends and the destiny of the society depend upon the mediation and will of the queen. Man's sense of security in the face of personal misfortunes can be re-established by magic or religion, but the orderliness of cosmic laws is guaranteed only by the relationship of the queen with the supernatural. These laws are inscrutable, but the procedures for arousing pity in the heart of a human queen or for appeasing her anger are intelligible; and thus man can have confidence in undertaking his tasks. Moreover, he need not and must not resort to magic in his major economic activities, for he can and must rely upon the queen. Since the final justification of the pivotal position of the queen is her divinity, garden magic is conceived to be disruptive, like witchcraft: it competes with the power of the queen. One consequence of this conception is that success or failure in subsistence activities is regarded as immediately dependent upon industry, the application of practical knowledge and suitable materials, and that he who uses garden magic is a thief or a witch. 643 789

In most neighbouring tribes there is some public treatment of the seeds before they are sown, or the hoes and ploughs are smeared with medicine obtained from the chief: among highveld Sotho such as the Xanaxwa and Maketshe, there is even a special hut for storing the sacred seed, a few grains of which are handed to each householder at sowing time, and in this hut, which is associated with the *gwasi* drums and with fertility in man, girls reaching puberty are isolated and newly married 241 789

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241 789 couples sleep for the first few nights. Among the Lovedu these practices have no counterpart. Given rain, what is necessary to make the crops prosper is work and good soil, not medicine, and as a result one receives the impression of a practical attitude, not only to agriculture, but, by extension, also to most economic activities. But success both in hunting and in pastoral activities to some extent depends upon the use of magic, although by comparison with the Nguni and Tswana the cattle cult is very much attenuated.

461 Thrift and industry are regarded as virtues. It is the hard-working bride who is sought after, while the most eligible bridegrooms are the *dibuglu*, those who by industry have filled their grain pits. But what is valued is not just work; it is work to attain self-sufficiency, that will make one independent, rather than work which places one in a subservient position. Even, as they phrase it, 'In work for the chief, it is only the fool who kills himself'. Hard work must not be thought of in terms of our conceptions, for the outlook of the Lovedu is far less dominated by intensive striving and deep concentration and more by care-free, easy-going standards than ours. Work has dignity, for the maxim, 'It is not the gift-pumpkin [but the produce of one's own garden] that is juicy', is meant, not to deprecate the gift, but to foster pride in the products of one's labour; it is a tenet appropriately urged when the clothes which a youth displays have been acquired, not by his own efforts, but as a present from his parents. Work is accorded recognition: the child who begins herding is said also to begin to deserve the food he gets. Work excuses failures and losses, for as they say, 'The one who loses cattle is the one who herds them', or, more generally, 'The one who breaks is the one who works'. On the other hand, there is scorn of indolence in the proverb, 'The sluggard has no locusts even if they sleep in his courtyard', and a warning in 'He who sits with staring eye-balls [idly] will die, but he who scratches for food [cultivates assiduously] will live'. Considering the craving for beer, it is almost heroic for a man, when refused this elixir of life, to console himself with the thought that 'He who stints me is he who helps me' [because I shall better be able to attend to my work]. But the work that is honoured and considered most congenial is work in situations in which, as in the work party, the reciprocities are fundamental.

643 648 The weakness of the queen as a woman is also her strength and the source of the prestige of the tribe. Her foreign policy is appeasement, not war; for, as they phrase it, 'The queen does not fight'. Reciprocity is the basis of her relations with her district heads, reconciliation the method of settling difficulties. Appeasement, one of the great values in the society, harmonizes with, supports, and is in turn supported by the reliance of the whole social structure upon compromise. This value and the traits corresponding to it interpenetrate every aspect of culture and of life. The hard régime of the initiation 'school' has been softened: there is no need to direct its procedures towards hardening the youth or instilling manly courage, and military discipline and regimentation are of little or no importance. Diplomacy works hand in hand with the 167 methods of the *khoro* and of reconciliation (*ku khawuliwa*), but it also

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cattle-dipping, quarantine regulations, and the reclamation of the reserves, have increased in recent years. Unless some compromise can be reached in regard to the prohibition of cutting down trees, all the Native industries will be stamped out. The change from wattle and daub to sun-dried bricks for constructing huts began before the forestry regulations and is now accelerated, fortunately without causing a major disturbance. Dipping is regarded as a sinister device for keeping down the number of cattle—the hurried driving to and from the dip and the lack of care of wounded cattle or of those in calf do in fact cause deaths, but the absence of milch cows, also attributed to dipping, is the result of overworking the cattle, their poor quality, and inadequate grazing land. Natives believe that dipping exists for the special benefit of dipping officials, who come as poor men, but are rich when they leave. Dipping and quarantine regulations, as well as grazing fees in the Crown Lands, have led to complications in transferring the cattle of the marriage exchanges, driven out customs incipiently accepted from the West, such as cattle posts and cattle racing on the day of the first fruits festival, and introduced the conception of fees for *ku fisa*, the care of cattle by others.

But one of the most unsuspected results is the growth of a reluctance, not merely to slaughter, but also to sell cattle. The evil of this tendency is incalculable, but it is an inevitable result of modern conditions. Sales are difficult, because of the restrictions on movement and the absence of markets; the need to sell or to slaughter is smaller than it was because money is available and agriculture less precarious; the emphasis upon material possessions and the liberation among Christians of cattle from the chain of cattle exchanges tends to imbue them with new values. The tendency is for them to become a standard of wealth rather than a means of subsistence or of facilitating marriage. There is a strong aversion even to slaughter the cattle that used to be killed in marriage negotiations, their place being taken by money and clothes. A strong incentive to slaughter cattle cannot easily be created, since it is not meat, but beer, with which one regales one's neighbours and maintains a reputation for liberality. Among the Lovedu the growing anti-economic conception of cattle has nothing to do with their alleged sacredness.

Western culture has presented itself with a formidable problem. Improvement of stock by way of pedigree bulls, the Lovedu have decisively rejected: they suspect that the Government will claim perhaps the calves, perhaps some other right of interference. They have also for similar reasons refused other aid, such as the introduction of a suitable grass.

Not all the great changes in agriculture have come from the European. The Shangana-Tongs introduced valley cultivation, which was subsequently stimulated by congestion on the hills and by the greater ease of manipulating the plough in the valleys than on the hillsides. With the plough, rejected in its early heavy form, but accepted later when it became lighter, a new set of reactions started. Crops and beer became more abundant, the old forms of co-operative work were transformed, and the effect of the absence in town of the men was minimized. But the plough is destroying the protective verges of fields, sweeping away the borders

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177 241 134 planted with sweet sorghum, and breaking down the contour walls of stone that stopped the rush of water on the slopes. The soil, taxed to its utmost by the mixed crops planted, is gradually becoming exhausted; it is being more easily washed away and the erosion has already silted up the lower stretches of rivers, so that old riverside gardens there have been destroyed. The introduction of donkeys added to the cumulative destructive effect, with which neither the combined forces of agricultural demonstrators and forest rangers, nor the stimulus of agricultural shows and competitions, nor the innate ingenuity of the Native can hope to contend. The fundamental evil is over-population, not over-stocking. In the old days a man hoed near grazing land at his own risk; to-day he must plough where he can.

177 437 A miscellaneous series of reactions may be briefly enumerated. Money subserves some purely economic purposes: it purchases various European articles, such as clothes and cloths, sewing machines and soap, candles, lanterns and paraffin, sieves and enamel dishes, iron objects, cycles, and wagons. But, compared with articles of local manufacture, these introductions are insignificant except among Christians. In the new forms of service and co-operation money also has a purely economic function and threatens the old reciprocities. But it is not always easy to say whether money economy is more rapidly transforming institutions than institutions are transforming money economy: often money becomes incorporated into the pattern of goodwill exchanges. The victory may lie with [182] Western conceptions, but incalculable forces are massing against them, and there is a tendency among the best-educated Natives to revive the past in answer to the challenge of the European.

177 182 The result will be a subtle and unpredictable interpretation. The suspicion that motivates the reaction is both effect and cause: it is the result of a feeling of insecurity, but it leads to protective adjustments in all spheres of culture. A woman may refuse to don a newly bought European blanket until it has been soiled by being worn by some one else susceptible to its dangers or, as they say, until 'the European can no longer be seen in it'. This attitude is evidence both of an old pattern and of profound distrust of the European. Tropical ulcers are sometimes attributed to Nyasaland boys, who are hated for their sexual adventures [54] with Lovedu women; but in fact tropical ulcers have always been there, though the serious lesions appeared for the first time only after the great famine of 1894-6. The psychological determinants of change are resultants of subtle combinations of objective facts and subjective errors.

177 146 182 Change of diet in recent years has contributed to the evil of malnutrition. Its causes are complex. On the one hand, the variety of old crops has been reduced by the plough and congestion destroys the vegetation that is used as relishes and fruits; on the other, the substitutions are inadequate and consist mostly of starches. Physical degeneration weakens the Native as an employee, lassitude adversely affects the incentives and the energy necessary for the tasks of subsistence, and a sense of insecurity fans the flames of suspicion. The difficulties of the dietician and the medical man increase immensely. This is what an intelligent and particularly unbiassed young man feels: 'In European hospitals they plan

3: Krige E-5 (1928-1938)1938 FX14 Lovedu FX14

in effective check the tendency for people to move away after every quarrel or accusation of witchcraft, villages were not only appreciably larger than to-day but also somewhat differently arranged, with both courtyard and cattle-kraal in the centre. Wherever possible the Sotho build on mountains, which are covered with a rich, loamy soil well suited to cultivation, are less fever-ridden than the valleys, and in the old days afforded better protection against enemies. Indeed, it is not until recent times that the valleys have been opened up even for agriculture. Within the village each married woman generally has two huts, kitchen- and sleeping-hut, while one or more fenced-in sections near the hedge are devoted to the storage of mealies on the cob and beer-making activities.

TRIBAL ECONOMY. The tribes of the Lowveld are predominantly agricultural, possessing on the whole few cattle. Milk, which many adults find nauseating, plays a very minor part in their diet, milk taboos are unknown while the meat sacrifice is rare, beer taking its place. As among Venda and the Sotho of the Highveld, women are not as strictly excluded from contact with cattle as among the Nguni; not only is it common for girls to herd cattle in the absence of boys in town or at the circumcision school, but many women also possess cattle in their own right. While it would be impossible here to give a full account of Lowveld agriculture, it is of interest to enumerate some of its more salient aspects. Men take a considerable part in agricultural activities, every married man having one large field for which he is responsible. But while women plant every kind of crop, men grow and reap only mealies, grain crops, and sugar-cane; pumpkins, beans, ground- and monkey-nuts, &c., are considered as purely a woman's concern. In our area, as elsewhere, these crops are mostly planted together in the same field, mealies predominating in some parts, kaffir-corn or millet being the chief crop in others. Partly as a result of congestion and partly in order to take advantage of differential climatic conditions as between mountain and valley, fields of any one family are generally very widely scattered, being sometimes as much as ten miles apart. Recognition of the food value of various wild fruit trees, such as the morula and wild fig, is shown by the fines attached to cutting them without special permission. An interesting feature

3: Krige E-5 (1928-1938)1938 FX14 Lovedu FX14

241 of the agriculture of the more mountainous portions of the Lowveld is the use of terraces, or rather contour walls of stone, for there is no levelling of the ground in between, to prevent excessive washing away of soil. With the absence of men in the towns and the introduction of the plough with subsequent preference for valley cultivation, these contour walls are tending to fall into disuse.

462 [171] Division of labour between the sexes is the same here as among Venda and the Highveld tribes of the Northern Transvaal. While care of cattle is the province of men and agricultural work is done by both sexes, cooking and housekeeping is confined to women. Men are responsible for the erection of storage receptacles, renewal of pantry and village enclosures and the lion's share in hut-building, including thatching, for women do only plastering of walls and preparation of the floor. The crafts confined to men are ironwork, work in skin, and all wood-work such as the manufacture of drums, platters, spoons, milk pails, stamping blocks, porridge twirlers, and flat winnowing baskets. Pottery is confined to women, but weaving and basketry (other than the making of winnowing baskets) is done by both sexes.

642 643 Political Organization and Position of the Chief. The most outstanding features of the Lobedu culture complex, which clearly differentiate the Lowveld tribes from their neighbours to the south and west, are ritual suicide of the chief and the possibility of women ruling in their own right.[1] Among the Lobedu the chief reigns for a period of four circumcision schools, each 'school' being separated from the previous one by a period of almost ten years, and then has to drink poison and die. The institution can hardly continue when its supporting background of ritual and belief is crumbling, but it has survived to this day; the immediate predecessors of the present Lobedu and Letswalo rulers died unnatural deaths in the traditional manner, Modjadji II in 1894 and Mamathola in 1905. There is in this area no conscious belief that growth of the crops, welfare of the cattle,

[184] [1] These two features occur together in the most important tribes of the Lowveld such as the Lobedu, Khaha, Narene, Thabina. The only tribes to whom this institution is foreign are the Phalaborwa and Tsubye and the two Venda tribes of Ngoila and Tswale. Sekhopo and Radwadu, sections of the Balobedu, broke away when the first woman succeeded and themselves have only men rulers.

4: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1954
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THE LOVEDU OF THE TRANSVAAL

By J. D. *and* E. J. KRIGE

The World View of the Lovedu

101 THE Lovedu are a South Bantu tribe ruled by a divine queen. They live amid fertile foothills and forest-clad ravines below the Drakensberg escarpment in the north-eastern Transvaal. Their country, of which the present Mujaji Reserve is but a small portion, is situated near the frontiers of the main masses of Sotho-Tswana, Venda, Tsonga, and Nguni peoples; and it was important for the development of Lovedu institutions that the great migratory movements of these major groups skirted round this geographically insulated area.

144 Before the coming of the Lovedu the population of this area appears to
177 have been predominantly Sotho not unmixed with Karanga, Tsonga, and Nguni elements. Then, about three centuries ago, a small group of Karanga
563 immigrants from the crumbling empire of Monomatapa in Southern Rhodesia arrived and gradually incorporated the local population. From this
642 group the royal house of the Lovedu traces its descent, and it was these people who introduced the complex of royal institutions which eventually became crucial for the world view of the Lovedu tribe. For two centuries, the formative period of their development, they enjoyed peace during which they came to dominate the area and to establish firmly the conception of the divine kingship which they had brought from the north. The situation was complicated at first by the numerical weakness of the nuclear group and the diversity of the incorporated alien groups; and a major challenge was later presented by the influx in the first half of the nineteenth century of great numbers of refugees fleeing from the depredations of Shaka, Moselekatse, and others, and seeking sanctuary in the inviolable realm of Mujaji, the rain queen of the Lovedu. They responded to this challenge by an adaptation of the pattern of the sacred kingship that facilitated incorporation of alien elements, and the result has been a remarkably coherent and well-integrated way of life.

Some Aspects of Lovedu Social Structure

231 Despite some unique emphases, Lovedu culture is not atypical of the
● 241 South Bantu. They practise a mixed economy of hoe-culture and cattle-rearing with, however, less reliance upon cattle than Nguni or Tswana. They cultivate a fair variety of crops, most important of which are maize, millet, pumpkins, and groundnuts, and their exploitation of the rich, natural sub-tropical vegetation for purposes of nutrition, economic pur-
231 suits, and medico-magical practices is exceedingly thorough. The few cattle that are reared are significant, not for subsistence or as wealth, but for

5:Krige E-5 (1936-1938, 1961-1962) 1964
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LOBEDU PROPERTY, MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Though women do most of the cultivation, the Lobedu husband is expected to play his part in producing food for his family. Every married man, therefore, has a field of his own which he cultivates with the help of his wives. The produce of this field is used for any beer- or work-parties that the man may wish to give and is a kind of bank upon which his wives may draw when they run short. If, however, a man helps one wife from his personal stores he must give all his wives an equal amount irrespective of their needs. When he first marries, the husband works with his wife in their common field. On marrying a second wife he acquires a field of his own (in addition to the one for his new wife) which his wives take it in turn to weed. It is said that if he had no field of his own but were merely to help each wife in turn to cultivate her field there would be endless trouble in maintaining equality between them. One of them for instance might say, 'How is it that when you come and work in my field you just sit but when you go to the field of the mother of So and So even the shade doesn't tempt you!'

A father is responsible for helping his sons to marry. But since a man seldom possesses cattle other than those already involved in bride-price exchange and a son uses the cattle of his sister, boys in a 'house' in which there are no girls often have to go out and work or with the help and advice of their father acquire bride-price in other ways. In the old days an orphan usually hired out his services to carry salt or iron ore from far countries in order in this way to acquire marriage hoes or cattle. Expenses in goats and money over and above the cattle given in marriage are met by the boy himself with the help of his father. A father should see to it that his son is provided with a field when he marries but in practice it is very often the mother who concerns herself with this problem. The father has jural control over his sons and is responsible for their debts.

The wives in a polygynous household differ in status. The chief wife is the daughter of the mother's brother—the cattle-linked or any uterine mother's brother or mother's half-brother. She will bear the heir and future head of the village. Where there has been no marriage with the mother's brother's daughter it is the first wife, the one married with his father's cattle that is chief wife. A chief wife exercises no control over